

## NEW SUBJECTS AND NEW EMPHASES IN THE 1960 HOUSING CENSUS

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In the past, the census programs have changed as the statistical needs of the country have changed. The 1960 Housing Census program is no exception. It will be quite different from previous censuses because it will contain many new subjects and new emphases. This reflects the changing statistical needs in current housing programs, such as urban renewal, traffic management, water supply and pollution, and urban planning in general. The change in emphasis is the outgrowth of experiences gained by governmental agencies, by university research bureaus, and by analysts concerned with markets for housing and consumer goods or with factors associated with residential financing.

Considerable effort was made to learn of these changing needs and to incorporate new subjects into the program. At the same time, it was necessary to do so without increasing the over-all scope and cost over that of the 1950 Census. To accomplish this, it was necessary to make greater use of sampling, to drop items of limited usefulness, and to restrict the types of items and the amount of detailed classification. In addition, some items which were considered fundamental to current statistical requirements had to be omitted because of budgetary limitations.

Censuses of housing traditionally have provided benchmark data on characteristics of four general types: structural, occupancy and use, facilities and equipment, and financial. Structural characteristics include such items as: number of rooms in the unit, number of units in the structure, and a description of the structural condition. Occupancy and use characteristics include such items as: tenure; number of persons in unit; and, in the case of vacant units, whether the unit is for rent, for sale, or held off the market. Equipment and facilities include some items which are descriptive of the quality of housing—toilet, bathing, and heating facilities, for example—and some items which are considered descriptive of the standards of living—air conditioning, clothes washer. Financial characteristics cover rents and value. The 1960 Census will provide not only benchmark data on characteristics, but also some data on the activity that is occurring in housing.

Of the shifts in emphasis between 1950 and 1960, two stand out as being somewhat more significant than others. The first is the inclusion in 1960 of a measure and description of the gross changes in the housing inventory. The components of change part of the 1960 Housing Census will provide information on changes between the censuses of 1950 and 1960. For two previous decades, various individuals and groups, including Bureau of the Census, attempted to estimate the magnitude of these various components, without much success. The type of information to be collected will be similar to that which was collected in the Census Bureau's 1956 National Housing Inventory. In that survey, the first of its kind, data were collected on gross changes during the period 1950 to 1956. The data consisted of the measurement and the

characteristics of the major types of changes, such as, new construction, conversion, merger, demolition. In addition, the survey provided some information on units which remained essentially unchanged.

The second significant shift is the inclusion in the housing inventory of all private living accommodations. This change is an attempt to close a gap in our knowledge about the way people live—particularly in areas subject to urban renewal programs. Heretofore, the census has restricted the housing universe to living quarters which met specified criteria for classification as dwelling units. Generally, a dwelling unit consisted of quarters which were occupied as separate living quarters and which had both cooking equipment and a private entrance. The 1960 Census will include all private living quarters which are separate housing units even though the unit may have only one of the two specified criteria. Although this is an oversimplification of the comparison of the definitions, it serves to indicate the expanded coverage of the living quarters universe. The types of quarters which will be added in 1960 are, for example, rooms in converted houses which are occupied by a separate family or individual but whose occupants do not have any cooking equipment or share common kitchen facilities. In 1950, the exclusion of large rooming houses from the housing inventory resulted in the loss of many quarters which actually were separate housing units.

Because the 1960 Census will identify all separate living quarters, the identification of the unit of enumeration will be changed from "dwelling unit" to "housing unit." For purposes of comparability with 1950, housing units which have both cooking equipment and separate entrance will be identified as dwelling units.

Of the individual subject items in the 1960 Housing Census, less than one-half were included as such in the 1950 Census. These are: number of units in structure, number of rooms, year structure built, tenure, contract rent, value, water supply, bathing facilities, toilet facilities, heating equipment, heating fuel, and cooking fuel.

There are six additional items carried over from 1950 but which have been changed since then because of the necessity to improve the concept to satisfy the needs of the users. These include: condition, farm residence, classification of vacant units, gross rent, radio, and television. The 1960 plans are to classify farm residence on the basis of number of acres in the property and the value of agricultural products sold. Vacant units "held for occasional use of the owner" are to be separated from the total group held off the market. Gross rent will be obtained simply by adding the cost of gas, electricity, water, and bulk fuel to the contract rent. Estimates of rent without furniture, in the case of furnished units, will not be used. With regard to radio and television, the number of sets will be reported rather than merely

their presence in the dwelling. Another change incorporated in the 1960 Census is the measure of structural condition of housing units. In 1950, all dwelling units were classified as either "not dilapidated" or "dilapidated." In the 1960 program, the concept of "not dilapidated" has been subdivided to reflect two gradations of quality—"sound" and "deteriorating."

This leaves a list of sixteen items which are being collected for the first time. They are: type of trailer, presence of basement in structure, number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, elevator in structure, duration of vacancy, year present household moved into unit, hot water, heating fuel, source of water supply, method of sewage disposal, number of automobiles for personal use, and five equipment items—air conditioning, home food freezer, clothes washing machine, clothes dryer, and telephone. The population items used in the tabulation of housing data—number of persons in housing unit, color of head of household, and income—are unchanged from 1950.

Many of the changes which have been made, particularly those involving concepts, are the outcome of working closely with staffs of other Federal Government agencies and with advisory committees. We have, in addition, brought in experts in various fields to supplement our staff in the research and developmental stages prior to accepting a new item or making any changes in items retained from 1950.

The aim of the Bureau of the Census to include items of high priority made it imperative to reduce the basic program in other aspects. A few 1950 items were dropped—mortgage status of owner-occupied homes, kitchen sink, type of refrigeration, and electric lighting.

A few subjects which had been proposed were discarded in favor of subjects considered to have a higher priority or considered to be less costly to enumerate. One proposal, which would add to the understanding of urban problems, was to obtain data on all structures—type, floor space, number of floors, etc. Later, it became apparent that resources were not available to develop this proposal.

Another proposal was to collect detailed information on housing costs for owner-occupied properties, e.g., taxes, utilities, fuels. Still another was to enumerate the characteristics of the previous housing for households that had moved in the two years prior to the census, e.g., where the previous house was located, rent paid, or value.

Still another proposal, which was discarded because of budgetary limitations, was the recommendation to extend the block statistics program to urban fringes and to places with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants. However, for 1960, the Bureau is contracting with these cities for block statistics. The cities will pay the incremental costs to number the blocks and tabulate the detailed data.

As has been mentioned, sampling will be used more extensively in 1960 than in 1950. Only 9 of the 31 items to be collected in cities of 50,000 or more (block cities) and 3 of 33 items to be collected elsewhere will be enumerated on a 100 percent basis. In fact, the only 100 percent items are those which are needed either for the control of the enumeration process or for providing block statistics. Of the sample items, about a third are collected on a 5 percent basis. For the 5 percent items, information would be provided for large areas such as standard metropolitan areas, counties, and cities with a population of 50,000 or more. The 20 or 25 percent samples permit statistics down to cities of at least 10,000. For smaller places, most of the items collected in the 20 and 25 percent samples will be presented, but for a very limited number of categories. For vacant dwelling units, the sample will not be adequate to provide detailed characteristics for places smaller than standard metropolitan areas and for places under 30,000 only a count of vacant units by status will be provided.

Plans for the 1960 Census, as in 1950, call for detailed statistics on residential financing. On the basis of experiences in 1950 and more recently in the 1956 National Housing Inventory, data on residential financing are expected to emphasize recent financing transactions. However, less detail than in 1950 will probably be collected on rental properties. As in 1950, we expect to obtain some of the information from the owners of residential properties, supplemented by information from lenders.

As now being developed, the enumeration on residential financing and on components of change in the housing inventory may be combined. If so, statistics for the United States as a whole and for each of 25 standard metropolitan areas can be provided for both programs. The information would be collected as of December 1959. Information on mortgaged properties will, therefore, not be an integral part of the basic 1960 Census, nor was it in 1950.

The 1960 Census was planned with recognition of the importance of including items which would be of optimum value in meeting current needs. At the same time, it was considered desirable to maintain comparability with previous censuses. For example, although the basic unit of enumeration has been revised, many users and our advisory committees stressed the need to retain comparability with the 1950 definition. Where possible, this objective is being met.

In connection with the enumeration of the housing unit as the basic unit of measure, it was the recommendation that housing statistics be published for all housing units, instead of dwelling units only. In addition, a few statistics should be published separately for housing units of the type which were omitted from the 1950 Census.

Refinement of present plans, as well as limitations of publication space, may change some of our proposals. Within this framework, it is hoped that this forthcoming census will provide data which would serve the most urgent needs for housing statistics.

## 1960 CENSUS OF HOUSING—CONTENT AND COVERAGE

Characteristics	Percent coverage in		Characteristics	Percent coverage in	
	Block cities (population of 50,000 or more)	Other urban and rural places		Block cities (population of 50,000 or more)	Other urban and rural places
Structure			Equipment and facilities		
Condition.....	100	25	Water supply.....	100	25
Number of units in structure..	20	20	Bathtub or shower.....	100	25
Year structure built.....	25	25	Toilet.....	100	25
Number of rooms.....	100	100	Number of bathrooms.....	20	20
Number of bedrooms.....	5	5	Source of water.....	...	20
Type of trailer.....	25	25	Sewage disposal.....	...	20
Basement in structure.....	20	20	Telephone.....	25	25
Elevator in structure.....	20	...	Automobile use.....	20	5
Occupancy			Heating equipment.....	25	25
Tenure status.....	100	100	House heating fuel.....	5	5
Vacancy status.....	100	100	Cooking fuel.....	5	5
Duration of vacancy.....	25	25	Water heating fuel.....	5	5
Duration of occupancy.....	25	25	Television.....	5	5
Farm residence.....	...	25	Radio.....	5	5
Financial			Clothes washing machine.....	5	5
Contract rent.....	100	25	Clothes dryer.....	5	5
Gross rent.....	25	25	Home food freezer.....	5	5
Value.....	100	25	Air conditioning.....	5	5